

WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2023 AT WICKHAMBREAUX VILLAGE HALL, THE STREET, WICKHAMBREAUX, CT3 1RJ

Present: Parish Cllr Peter Collinson
Parish Cllr Caroline Rees
Parish Cllr Theresa McRobbie
Parish Cllr Martin Twyman
Parish Cllr Faith Wright
Parish Cllr Mark Wrightson

City Cllr Lee Castle (from 8.30pm)

Mrs Chenice Howard-Sparkes, Clerk to the Council

3 Members of the Public

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2023-2024

Cllr Wright nominated Cllr Collinson for the position of Chairman. Cllr Rees seconded that Cllr Collinson be elected for the year 2023-2024 and this was unanimously passed. There were no other nominations.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2023-2024

Cllr Wright nominated Cllr Rees for the position of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Twyman seconded that Cllr Rees be elected for the year 2023-2024 and this was unanimously passed. There were no other nominations.

3. ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES AND GROUPS FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2023-2024

Committees:

- Finance Committee – Cllr Rees, Cllr McRobbie and Cllr Twyman were all unanimously voted onto the committee.
- Emergency Sub-Committee Representative – Cllr Twyman was unanimously voted on as the Parish Council's representative on the committee.
- Playing Field Committee Representative – Cllr Rees was unanimously voted on as the Parish Council's representative on the committee.
- Village Hall Committee Representative – Cllr Rees was unanimously voted on as the Parish Council's representative on the committee.

Groups:

- Law and Order – Cllr Wrightson was unanimously voted as lead representative
- Tree Representative – Cllr Wright and Cllr Wrightson were unanimously voted as lead representatives
- Planning – Cllr Wright and Cllr Collinson were unanimously voted as lead representatives
- Highways – Cllr Twyman was unanimously voted as lead representative
- Village Greens – Cllr McRobbie and Cllr Wrightson were unanimously voted as lead representatives
- Footpaths – Cllr Wright was unanimously voted as lead representative
- Flood Protection – Cllr Twyman was unanimously voted as lead representative
- KALC – Cllr Collinson and Cllr Wrightson were unanimously voted as lead representatives
- Website – Cllr Collinson was unanimously voted as lead representative
- Consultations – Cllr Collinson was unanimously voted as lead representative

4. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr Mike Sole (Work Commitments). Cllr Collinson wished to acknowledge the contribution of, and record thanks to, Robin Treacher and Darren Howe who both stood down at the recent May 2023 elections.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

All councillors were issued with and completed a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) form, which must be returned to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of taking up office.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2023

All councillors voted in favour that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2023 be accepted as a true record of the meeting and the Chairman duly signed them.

7. INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING

4(7) – Cllr Wright confirmed she contacted the EA (Environment Agency) on 15 May 2023 and is awaiting a response.

9 (Village Greens) – The Clerk reported that she has received photographs from Cllr Rees and has reported the condition of the white bridge in Wickhambreaux to KCC.

12(iv) – Cllr Twyman reported that 11 volunteers attended the vegetation clearance works at St Andrew's Church. A further working party will be convened in the autumn.

12(v) – The Clerk reported that Cllr Sole has provided a contact at CCC to explore the possibility of street cleaning further. The Clerk will follow up with the contact and report back to councillors.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS

City Cllr Lee Castle

Cllr Castle reported that following the recent May 2023 elections, the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats Party (Lib Dems) have agreed a coalition cabinet. Cllr Castle advised that the current Cabinet system is not able to be reviewed for five years after implementation. There will be six Labour councillors and three Lib Dems, with Cllr Alan Baldock (Labour) as the new leader and Cllr Michael Dixey (Lib Dem) as deputy leader. The new cabinet will focus on the 100 day action plan, which will include a review of the draft Local Plan and will likely result in a new consultation in the autumn. A meeting regarding the draft Local Plan is due to take place in July 2023. In the short term, the cabinet will be reviewing planned projects and other aims of the previous council.

Cllr Castle also reported he is due to attend a virtual meeting with CCC Planning to discuss planning application CA/23/00484 for Land at The Hill in Littlebourne, and more generally to discuss proposed mitigation measures for Stodmarsh Nature Reserve.

Cllr Castle expressed a wish to meet with representatives from all rural parish councils within his ward to get a better understanding of local issues and plans for the future.

County Cllr Mike Sole

Please refer to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 April 2023 for the most recent update.

Neighbourhood Watch

East Kent residents are being warned to be vigilant against cold callers following incidents in Whitstable. On 10 May 2023, three people living in the area received phone calls from a man claiming to be a detective. He claimed to be investigating possible credit card fraud, using that as a pretext to ask about their card details. Those with elderly or vulnerable relatives or friends are urged to be on guard against fraudulent callers.

Vehicle theft continues to be an increasing crime trend across the UK and Kent. There are ways to prevent this happening:

- Use a Faraday bag or place keys in a metal tin, to prevent the transmitter working in the case of keyless models
- Ensure the vehicle is locked and kept in a garage if possible
- Keep car keys hidden in property in case of burglaries
- Consider using a steering wheel, gear lever or clutch pedal security device
- Ensure you carry out checks on a used vehicle before buying

For further advice, please visit Kent Police's website.

Local police circulate messages and crime prevention information to residents in their area via the My Community Voice (MCV) messaging service. It provides a two-way communication with your local police officers. For more information and to sign up go to:

<https://www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk>

Spring is the ideal time to review security around your property, especially sheds, garages and outbuildings. The reopening of car boot fairs gives thieves the opportunity to shift stolen goods that can be acquired illegally from poorly secured buildings.

9. HIGHWAYS

(i) A257 Update

Cllr Twyman reported that the A257 Group has not met since the last meeting, but is currently focusing on planning application CA/23/00484 for 300 houses on Bekesbourne Lane in Littlebourne. Cllr Twyman has conveyed Wickhambreaux Parish Council's views to the Group, as agreed at the last meeting.

General Highways Matters

Cllr Twyman reported Grove Ferry Road is due to be closed from 25 May 2023 for up to two days, between the hours of 09.30 and 15.30. The closure is required while pole works are undertaken by Openreach.

Cllr Twyman reported that he is due to meet with KCC Highways Steward David Burton tomorrow (17 May 2023) to inspect various potholes around the parish. The List was highlighted as a potential area for consideration.

10. PLANNING

CA/23/00700 – Riverscroft, Grove Ferry Road

The Parish Council has no objections to the proposed single storey detached dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling.

CA/22/01530 – Land to the North of The Quaives Retreat, Seaton Road

Cllr Wright was asked to contact CCC Planning for an update on the application.

CA/23/00484 – Land at The Hill, Bekesbourne Lane, Littlebourne

Cllr Wright advised she has submitted comments on behalf of the Parish Council (previously circulated) to CCC Planning.

CA/23/00434 – Wickham Court, The Green

CCC has granted the application for a single storey side extension to Garden Room.

UKPN (UK Power Networks) Electricity Sub-Station

A neighbouring resident to the site of a proposed new electricity sub-station has contacted the Parish Council to express concern that there appears to be no planning permission in place. The proposed site is located within a Conservation Area. The resident has been in contact with CCC Planning to clarify whether planning permission is required, and Cllr Wright has also made separate enquiries with CCC Planning on behalf of the Parish Council.

The resident has also expressed concern regarding potential noise impacts from the new sub-station. Cllr Collinson has contacted UKPN for further clarification on the proposals and to ascertain likely noise implications. The landowner has provided an update to the Parish Council, which has been shared with the resident.

11. UPDATE ON JOINT COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Standing Orders were suspended at this point to enable Mr Treacher to provide an update. Mr Treacher advised that Kent Police have finished their assessments in Wickhambreaux and Ickham, with further assessments in Stodmarsh due in the near future. The joint group is now 'live' and volunteers can sign up to join. A joint meeting of the volunteers who have expressed an interest will be held shortly, which will be publicised in an effort to gather more interest from additional residents. Standing Orders were resumed again at this point.

12. MAINTENANCE TO VILLAGE GREENS

Cllr McRobbie reported that she has obtained two quotations to date and is waiting on a further company to provide a comparison quotation. It was agreed to undertake further discussions with potential contractors to ascertain the most appropriate and cost-effective treatment options to achieve a good finish. It was agreed to defer this item until further discussions have been undertaken. In the meantime, Stodmarsh green has been weed treated to improve the current appearance of the green.

13. CLLRS' REPORTS

KALC

Robin Treacher reported that the KALC Canterbury Area Committee will be holding its AGM (Annual General Meeting) in the near future, date to be confirmed.

Village Hall Committee

Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, Lucy Rushbrooke, reported that drawings have now been obtained for the 'Plan A' refurbishment works to the village hall, which was the initial scheme to address the repairs required. These drawings have been submitted for Planning Permission and Building Control approval, which should both be in place by the end of July to enable works to proceed.

The Village Hall Committee has been exploring potential costs and feasibility of a longer term refurbishment project. Advice received indicates that the proposals would be a significant financial outlay, amounting to approximately £250,000. The Village Hall Committee will discuss this at their next meeting on 24 May 2023 (which will also be the Annual General Meeting). Should the Committee wish to proceed with the extensive refurbishment, permission will be sought from the Parish Council.

Lucy reported that she has two site visits arranged with potential contractors, and is in discussions with a further two potential contractors to arrange visits to quote for the works. The Village Hall Committee is aiming to undertake the works during the summer holidays, permissions and contractor availability allowing. The Primary School has been kept informed of the repairs required.

The Parish Council wished to record thanks to all the volunteers who helped host the community Coronation event in the village hall on 06 May 2023.

Playing Field

Cllr Rees reported that the Playing Field Committee Annual General Meeting will be held on 28 June 2023 at 5.30pm in the village hall.

Flooding

Cllr Twyman reported that there is a minor leak in the riverbank near The Mill. The Environment Agency (EA) has been informed. The EA suspect that a Southern Water (SW) pipe is located in the same area and may be responsible.

Mr Treacher advised that, to his understanding, there are no SW pipes in the immediate vicinity of the leak. The leak appears to originate near the bypass/overflow channel. Cllr Twyman agreed to follow up with the EA to request further investigation.

Cllr Twyman also reported that the aquifer is rising following the recent rainfall in March and April. Most of the Nailbourne is now flowing, although not along its full length.

Cllr Twyman reported that he was contacted by a resident concerned at the height and flow of the Black Hole Dyke to the rear of The Street. Cllr Twyman alleviated their concerns and the water level has reduced. Further investigations are ongoing to establish the cause.

14. FINANCE

The expenditure totalling £1,362.29 was authorised, made up of:

- KALC – Dynamix Councillor Course 01 June 2023 - £60.00
- Zurich Municipal – Parish Council Insurance 2022-2023 - £467.35
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes – Clerk Salary May 2023
- Elizabeth Stevens – Village Hall Cleaner Salary May 2023 (including backdated pay to October 2022)
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE May 2023
- Cllr Theresa McRobbie – Reimbursement for weed treatment on Stodmarsh green - £40.00

The following interim payment was authorised between April-May 2023:

- CCC - Printing of APM Invitations - £15.00
- Peter Terrill - Wine for APM - £66.25

It was unanimously agreed to add Cllr McRobbie and Cllr Wrightson as signatories onto the Unity Trust Bank account.

15. CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that the Village Hall Committee has received a request from the School to book a number of evenings week commencing 17 July 2023 for end of school leaving events. One of the dates requested clashes with the Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council agreed to change their meeting date to 25 July 2023.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) Cllr Twyman reported that a car has been left in the Wickhambreaux Court Lane layby. The owners have been contacted, who have advised that the vehicle has broken down and will be removed as soon as possible.
- (ii) A number of residents have expressed a wish to fill the current vacancy on the Parish Council. Councillors agreed to send details of any residents who have approached them, with a view to arranging an informal meeting in due course to meet the residents prior to considering co-option.
- (iii) Cllr Rees reported that St Andrew's Church Open Gardens Event will be held on 02 July 2023. The Church has asked for some classic cars to be in attendance like last year, and Cllr Rees is liaising with classic car owners to establish who may be available. The cars will likely be parked on the gravel drive by the Church, which was the same arrangement as last year.

The meeting closed at 8.47pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....